

SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
For EMPLOYING the
POOR of this KINGDOM,
And for IMPROVING the
LINNEN and WOOLLEN
MANUFACTORIES, &c.

[Price Six-Pence.]

1029.C.9



Great Britain and Ireland.

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1803

CONSIDERATIONS

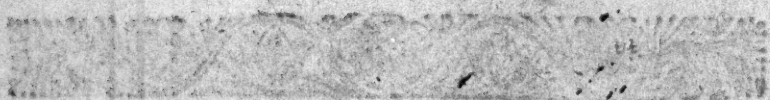
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By a MEMBER of the
HOUSE of COMMONS.



L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-Noster-*
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LONDON:

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SOME
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HAVING lately read a Pamphlet, entitled the *Golden Fleece*, with the Rise, Progress, and present Decay of our Woollen Manufactures, it lead me into some further Enquiries of the Causes of the said Decay, and to consider of some Means to Redress it.

I shall not therefore enter into the several Particulars contained in the above-mentioned Pamphlet, but say in general, that there are many Things, very fairly and honestly
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stated, worthy of Notice; and if the Scheme were possible to be perfected, in regard to the taking away the burthenfome Duties on the most essential Necessaries of Life, it would be a Work deserving the most earnest Consideration of Parliament, as a Matter of the highest Consequence, not only for the Woollen Manufactures, but for the whole Manufacturers of *England*.

However, while they continue as they are, it cannot be conceived to be the Interest of the Landed Gentlemen of *England*, to permit the Importation of *Irish* Worsted or Yarn, because of those numerous and burthenfome Taxes on most of the essential Necessaries of Life, which the *English* now labour under; and if I am rightly informed, none of them affect the Manufactures of *Ireland*.

There then must be such a Disproportion in the Price of Manufacturing, that the *Irish* Poor will be able to work and spin for Three Pence a Pound, what the Poor of *England* cannot afford to work and spin for Six Pence a Pound; add to that, the Cheapness of Provisions in *Ireland*: Will not therefore the Merchant, the Undertaker of this our valuable Woollen Commodity, fly or resort wholly

wholly to the Place where they can have Labour cheapest? By which Means, I conceive, that none of the Poor of *England* (if that Scheme should pass into a Law) would be employed in the Cloathing Trade, and considering the great Complaint of Poverty, the heavy Burthens most Parishes lie under to maintain their Poor, which daily encreases, the Swarm of Beggars and idle People, the great Decay of our antient Trade for Woollen Cloth, which the *English* once had the Reputation of being the only excellent Artificers, other Nations knowing little or nothing of it; yet now we find by unhappy Experience, that they equal, if not excell us therein, and therefore it must be our safest, our wisest Way, to propose first, a Method for securing that Manufacture to ourselves.

For if we send our Money beyond Sea for Yarn and Labour, then the more we buy, the less Money we have to pay, which will cause Scarcity of Money, and also want of Trade whereby to get more; but if we bestow our Money in Commodities made at home, our Money and Trade will certainly increase; and though a little while we pay somewhat more, yet it is easier to part with one Shilling, when Money and Trade is plenty and increasing, than to part with Six

Pence when Money and Trade are both wanting, especially seeing the one Shilling remains at Home, and returns again, but the Six Pence is carried into another Kingdom, and lost irrecoverably.

Wool is also the main Support of that Trade, which maintains and increases the Wealth, Strength and Glory of the *English* Nation, therefore of all Commodities of our own Growth, this ought to be most carefully encouraged; for it consists in the Consumption of our Woollen Draperies at home, in Exportation and quick Markets abroad, and for want of an Expedient to attain these Ends, whereby it might effectually be promoted, our Wool is fallen from One Shilling, to Six Pence a Pound, by reason that the Number of People at present employed therein, are not able to Manufacture it half so fast as it grows; and as it is most evident, that the Exportation of our unwrought Wool hath destroyed our Foreign Markets for the Sale of our Cloth; so it is as easily to be demonstrated, that had not such Quantities of *British* and *Irish* Wool been Exported, as at present it is said there are in vast Quantities, it would have fallen from One Shilling, to Four Pence a Pound, because as the Stock of Wool increases the Price must decrease in Proportion,

Proportion, so that there is no Way (as the Case now stands) to raise the Price of Wool, nor yet to keep it up where it is; for either we must Export our Wool, whereby we destroy our Trade, or bring all the idle poor People to Industry, by converting it at Home as fast as it grows in *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*; by which Means only, the *British* and the *Irish* Wool will considerably raise its Price, even from one Shilling, to two Shillings a Pound, which will infallibly remove the Exportation of it.

This being done, the Manufactures abroad will soon be destroy'd, nay, come to nothing, or at least not to hinder the Sale of our Cloths, as they now do; and for this most certain Reason, that they can't make Cloth without a Mixture of our Wool, but on most unequal Terms; for the *Spanish* Wool is so short and fine, and the *French* Wool so short and coarse, that they will neither work together nor apart without ours: Besides, we have Fullers-Earth, the Foreigners have none, or ought to have none. And when we consider, that for a certain Truth the Woollen Manufacture is a Tenth Part, at least in Fourteen, of all the other Manufactures of *England*, which are Exported, we cannot be too active in the promoting this natural Woollen Treasure, which
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will make the Mercantile Trade flourish, increase our Wealth, be a nursing Mother to our Seamen, Shipping and Navy, the Terror of other Nations.

To demonstrate the great Profit of the Woollen Trade, I observe, that a Pound of Wool of one Shilling Price will make a Yard of the finest Cloth, which, at a Medium, will be worth ten Shillings; so that if you export unwrought Wool, or have it work'd up in any other Kingdom, then, one in every Hundred Pounds worth of Wool, we lose amongst our Manufacturers nine Hundred Pounds, and so in Proportion, if it be spun elsewhere. Besides the Employment of the Poor, it hath this other Good attending it, for it breeds them up to a Habit of Industry, to learn whilst they are young to gain their Living when old: Add to that the Returns of our Woollen Cloths that are now Exported, which I am inform'd, amount to twelve Millions a Year. And as it is most certain, if this Manufacture is forced and encouraged, which can be no Way done but by our employing the Poor, there will be more than treble the Number now employ'd, (if the Scheme I shall propose here takes Effect) and the Returns from Abroad will bear their additional Proportion.

Least

Least it might be surmised that it may fall out, that we should employ more Poor in the Woollen Trade than we can export and vend, and if that should be found so, we may employ some of them in making of Linnen; for considering the vast Charge we are Yearly at, in purchasing Linnen from other Nations, whereby our Treasure is exhausted, it might turn out to be a most profitable Employment for the Good of *Great-Britain*.

This Linnen Manufactory is an Employment for the weakest People, not capable of stronger Work: Women and Children, and decrepid aged People, now the most chargeable to Parishes, and those who live idle, and are supported by the Sweat of other Mens Labours, and can by no other Employ so effectually be brought to live industriously.

By Experience 'tis found, that three quarters of a Pound of Thread, worth Twelve Pence per Pound spinning, will make one Ell of Cloth worth two Shillings; which three quarters of a Pound, two Spinners may spin in one Day; hence it follows, that Eight Thousand Spinners will spin Thread enough in one Day to make Four Thousand Ells of Cloth, worth Four Hundred Pounds; and working but two Hundred and Sixty Days in a Year,

may

may spin one Hundred and four Thousand Pounds worth of Linnen Cloth.

It is generally thought, the yearly Sum sent out of the Nation for Linnen Cloth, is computed at a Million of Money; and as there are Nine Thousand seven Hundred and Twenty-five Parishes, and that Nine in each Parish spin Linnen Cloth, we may gain the Million sent out of the Nation, and more: And sure I am, that double the Number may be employ'd in each Parish, take the Parishes one with the other, besides the Hands that may be spared to carry on the Woollen Manufacture; and were this Linnen Manufacture thus encouraged, the Landholders of *England* would quickly think it well worth their While to raise sufficient Hemp and Flax for the Manufacturer.

Neither need the Nation be at Part of the wild and foreign Expence, if we employ all Sorts of idle sturdy People in bunching Hemp, and making Cordage; and many Thousands of Women and Children in spinning Lint and Yarn for Cordage, Sails and Nets, for the Navigation of the Nation and Fishing Trade; the King might fill his Stores for the Royal Navy cheaper than now, and by the Labour of his own Subjects, and not
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be depending upon other Nations for these in Time of War.

Could it be consistent with the Freedom and Liberty of *England*, the best and most proper Method would be, to provide them out of such Malefactors as shall be sentenced for Transportation, to condemn them to Work-Houses for Years, where they may be serviceable for the Purposes before mention'd, and also to fit Tier to the Distaffs, reel Yarn, Swingle, or hitchell Hemp or Flax, weave, &c. and which an ordinary Ingenuity may attain to in a few Days, rather than to send them out with a Brand to commit further Villainies, or transport them, whence they presently return: And this the rather to be noticed, that it is with great Difficulty Merchants take them off the Sheriffs Hands; and often, after being sentenced for Transportation, they lie for Years, and sometimes during Life, in Prison, for want of Transportation, at an annual Expence to the County; or often obtain a general Pardon, because they know not what to do with them. This Method, I think also, would be the most Christian and Charitable Way; and by such a Method all these impudent Night-Walkers, and Nurseries of Debauchery, may be wholly removed.

This might be compleated by Five Work-Houses, one in the East, one in the West, one in the North, one in the South, and one in *London*.

I would recommend all Charity Schools, except those which have a Royal Foundation, to bring up their Youth, some to Spinning, Knitting, Weaving, Scouring, as well as Writing and Reading; and some likewise to other manufacturing Business, at leisure Times, which their Genius best fits them for; that when their Pens fail them, and the Learning that they acquire generally at those publick Schools sets them above the Vulgar Rank, and habits them to an inactive Life, to labour, (that often I have observed it very unfortunate) then they will have Recourse to the laborious Part, and what they learn in their Youth they will fall in Love with, and when old will not depart from it.

I have heard of Proposals for erecting Work-Houses in every County, more or less, answering the Largeness or Commodiousness of each County, for Manufacture; and that these Work-Houses should be erected by an equal Pound Rate on Lands and Tythes, &c.

Other

Other Proposals I have heard mention'd; That many Parishes join in setting up Work-Houses, and raise Twelve Pence in the Pound to provide Looms, Working Tools, &c. and when few Parishes associate, Two Shillings, or more; and that the first Year will be in preparing of Houses, &c. the Twelve Pence may require a Contribution for the Stock of Wool, Flax, Hemp, &c. which with the Salaries of the Officers, and other incident Charges of the Society, may amount to Six Pence a Pound more.

Many of the like I have heard of, but the very Expence of erecting these Work-Houses, the Looms, Working-Tools, Salaries of Officers, and other incident Charges, were there no other Reason, is a Forbiddance to encourage such Methods, as the greatest Part of the Design by that Means is frustrated, in laying a Tax upon the Country, not to buy in a Stock of Wool, Hemp, or Flax, to employ their Poor, but to erect Houses, &c. where the Country may be led into such an Expence, that the Parishes, who undertake this, may plunge themselves into a Debt never to be out of, and their Poor still to maintain.

To obviate these Difficulties, as well as for preventing the Expedient of bringing Wor-

sted and Yarn from *Ireland*; and for the better employing the Poor of *Great-Britain*, which will be a Means to work out all our Wool, that now either rots or is stolen into *France*; and that the sole Manufacture of *English, Irish, or Scottisb* Wool, may in a few Years, by this, happily be accomplish'd in *Britain*; for as the Woollen Manufacture returns Treasure to the Nation, so the Encouragement of the Linnen Manufacture preserves it from going out; and by this Means be the richest Nation in *Europe*, for Wealth and Power; and Wealth in every Kingdom is one of the essential Marks of their Greatness, and that is best express'd in the Measure and Greatness of their Trade; and then what can give a greater Lustre than encouraging our Woollen Manufacture? Which, as I before observed, is a Tenth Part in Fourteen of all the other Manufactures exported; and the Linnen as great a Consumer of our Wealth, and greater than any other imported.

The Method then that I shall propose is, to raise a Stock, or Fund, to provide such Work for the Poor of each Parish in every County, as they may do at their own Homes, which, never so homely, is more desired than any other Place; for suppose a Woman hath a sick Husband or Child, or some Infirmary upon herself;

herself; in all such Cases she might do something at Home, but can't leave her own House: Then they will have an Opportunity of working at such Times they can necessarily spare from their other Occasions, who being to work in their own Houses, and when they can with more Conveniency attend it, they may earn a Subsistence, which is from Four Pence to Six Pence a Day, working, I say, only at such Times; thus they will be pleased with it, as so much Money given them, and would not have done them half so much Good as the Pleasure of the Employment in this Labour.

Whereas real Work-Houses are only fit for Vagrants and sturdy Beggars, who have no Habitation, and must be held to their Labour as Galley-Slaves are tied to their Oars; but for poor People who have Habitations of their own, who are known to the Parish where they live, who would take Pains at Home; others who are in Want through Misfortunes in Life, 'tis fit, 'tis reasonable, 'tis becoming *English* Liberty, to employ them no where else but at Home.

And this Method for the Employment of the Poor in Labour at Home, is the single Point I shall rest upon.

There

There are Fifty Two Counties in *England* and *Wales*, and for a Stock to employ the Poor of each Parish in each County, I would propose a Stock or Fund of Five Hundred and Twenty Thousand Pounds, to be raised by a Lottery at Three *per Cent.* which Five Hundred and Twenty Thousand Pounds shall be divided so, that each County shall have Ten Thousand Pounds for a Stock or Fund to employ their Poor, either in the Woollen or Linnen Manufacture, or the Sum to be proportion'd according to the Smallness or Largeness of the Counties, which is most commodious for each County; which said Sum I would propose should be paid into the Bank; and that each County shall pay every *Christmas* into the Bank of *England* Three Hundred Pounds Neat Money, or in Proportion to the Distribution of it, to be distributed to the Claimants of the Tickets of such Lottery, one Year after the said Lottery is drawn.

That Four Justices of the Peace for each County, on the Bench in the Publick Hall or Court, at every General Quarter Sessions of the Peace to be held for each County, after Proclamation made three Times there, for what Money that shall be wanting to employ the Poor, or lay in a proper Stock of Wool, Flax, or Hemp, shall there sign an Instrument

ment in open Court, in the Blank Form of Blank, to draw on the Bank for any Sum of Money out of the said Sum so deposited in the Bank; and that the Member or Members that serve in Parliament, for the Time being, for each County, City, or Borough, of each County, shall likewise sign the same, if they are then present at such General Quarter Sessions of the Peace to be held for such County, otherwise, that they shall be tender'd the same to sign, provided he or they are resident within such County, at the General Quarter Sessions as aforesaid, or within one Month next after; and then if such Member or Members shall refuse to sign such Draught or Instrument, he or they shall declare their Reasons in Writing in another Paper, which shall express the Draught, the Sum drawn for, and Date thereof, for not signing the same; a Copy of which Reasons shall be kept with the Records of the County, and the Original shall be sent, certified by the Clerk of the Peace, with the Accounts so pass'd at every General Quarter Sessions; and for which Certificate the Clerk of the Peace shall not charge above Two Shillings and Six Pence, unless he be obliged to travel Twenty Miles to obtain the same, then he shall not charge above One Pound One Shilling; and if he be obliged to travel under Twenty Miles, on the said Account,

count, he shall not charge above Ten Shillings; which said Sum shall be charged to the common Expences which may attend the Woollen and Linnen Manufactory, and carried on to the next Account.

That an Account shall be given at each General Quarter Sessions held for each County, of what Stock of Wool, Flax, or Hemp, hath been bought from Time to Time, from the Time of the Account last deliver'd to the Justices of the said last General Quarter Sessions; what hath been paid for Work since the said Time; what deliver'd out, and what remains undeliver'd; what Cash is in Hand, and also in the Custody of the Bank; with a proper Certificate from the Bank, of the Cash remaining in their Hands.

That the Member or Members for each County shall, if he or they be in *London*, and able to attend the Parliament, (otherwise, of each capital City or Borough for each County) deliver the said Accounts to each House of Parliament, within one Month after every Sitting of Parliament, how such Accounts stand; what Money remains in the Bank; what Stock or Cash remains in each County; as also, what Quantity of Work deliver'd out, and remains undeliver'd up; what Profit
is

is made in each County, to the Date of the said Account, from the Foot of the last Account so stated at each General Quarter Sessions, to be perused by the Members of both Houses of Parliament.

That this general Account shall be so made up at every *Michaelmas* General Quarter Sessions, because the Members of Parliament are at that Time generally in the Country.

That none of the said County's Money shall be deliver'd to any Person or Persons, without giving a proper Security for being accountable for the same, as also employing of it to the Purpose beforemention'd; and that such Security shall be given in the open General Quarter Sessions, before Four Justices at least; which Security shall remain with the Records of the County, untill it be duly discharged by the Performance of the Covenants.

That whoever shall misapply or imbezzle any of the Money, Goods, or Effects of the said County Stock as aforesaid, shall be prosecuted in all Respects as in Case of an Extent from the Crown; and shall take Place of all Debts or Mortgages which may happen after the ——— Day of ——— upon the Estate or Estates of such Person so offending.

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That

That the Three Hundred Pounds a Year, which is to be paid into the Bank from each County annually, or in its Proportion, for the Use of the Proprietors of the Lottery Tickets, shall be rated and assess'd on the Lands, Tenements, Tythes, Hereditaments, and Personal Estates, in the same Manner as the Assessments of the Land Tax are now made, raised, and collected. But whatever Profit arises annually from the Manufacturing of the said Wool, Hemp, and Flax, in every County, shall first go towards the Discharge of the said Three Hundred Pounds; and the Sum or Sums that shall be wanting to make up the same, shall always be rated and assess'd, raised and collected in the Manner aforesaid.

That there shall be a proper Remedy against such Counties as refuse or neglect to pay their Quota's; as is empower'd by the Land-Tax Act.

By these Expedients you will be able, in a very few Years, to pay the Three Hundred Pounds a Year out of the Profits of the Manufacture, and thereby be eased of the heavy Burthen of the Poor; and in Twenty One Years, or less, with good Management, be able to pay off the Principal Sum, which Sum shall be redeemable by Parliament only.

Posterity,

Posterity, to all Generations, shall by that industrious Habit be secured from Beggary; never to be destitute of this beneficial Employment, while there are sufficient Hands employ'd to convert all the Wool, which *Great-Britain* and *Ireland* have to spare, into Cloth.

N. B. This being intended for a general Good for *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*; therefore, if the Directors of the Bank of *England* would be so generous to contribute to it, in allowing Two and a Half *per Cent.* for what Cash which for every three Months shall have lain in their Hands; and whatever Interest shall be due at the Year's End to be appropriated towards the Discharge of the Three Hundred Pounds a Year, which is to be paid by each County as aforesaid.

F I N I S.

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